

From: [Brooks Smith](#)
To: [Wilson, Elise](#)
Subject: Re: [External] Public service commission workshop
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 10:04:41 AM

April 6, 2021

VIA EMAIL (contact@psc.sc.gov)

The Honorable Jocelyn G. Boyd
Chief Clerk/Administrator
Public Service Commission of South Carolina
101 Executive Center Drive
Columbia, South Carolina 29210

Re: Workshop on April 16, 2021 Concerning Electric Systems
and Gas Systems

Dear Ms. Boyd,

I intend to participate in the April 16, 2021 workshop concerning electric systems and gas. In the event that I cannot participate due to communication issues, Shelley Robbins of Upstate Forever will deliver my comments.

My name is Brooks Smith and my property at 25 Drummond Rd in Travelers Rest was previously under consideration for the route. After receiving a certified letter from PNG on Sept 25th, I immediately contacted the consulting agency handling the surveys and discussed the contents of the letter. The agent informed me that my land would be surveyed and led me to believe I had no choice but to grant permission. My husband then contacted the agent and inquired if we were legally allowed to say no to the survey. The agent replied in the affirmative, stating that we could in fact refuse the survey. Our attorney informed us that PNG must obtain a court order for survey after a 30 day waiting period. This initial interaction reflects a lack of transparency that persisted throughout my experience and has been echoed by many of my neighbors. Simply informing me of my right to deny

the survey would have been a show of good faith on the part of PNG. Sadly, similar events occurred with many of the landowners on this proposed route. Often, they were told that the adjacent neighbors had "already agreed and were fine with the pipeline" which was a falsehood. There were instances where agents stated that survey permission had been granted by a landowner's spouse when it was not true. Several landowners misunderstood the pipeline to be a distribution line that would provide natural gas to their home and the agents did not correct the misunderstanding. One landowner thought the line would be placed along the roadside in front of his home when in fact the route map showed the pipeline dissecting his backyard completely. These are examples of the numerous stories that were passed along from landowners and they point to the necessity of providing accurate, consistent information to landowners affected by these projects.

Within days of receiving my letter, I reached out to Upstate Forever, the Southern Environmental Law Center, and retained an eminent domain attorney. Very quickly, I learned there was no approval process required for these projects and easement negotiations can proceed well before the public is fully aware of the project. Landowners must direct questions solely to the consulting agency whose lone objective is to efficiently and economically secure the necessary easements. I reached out to multiple state agencies searching for information regarding pipeline approval policies. Sadly, I surmised that landowners hold little power with regard to natural gas companies' use of eminent domain law. Without the knowledge and assistance of Shelley Robbins of Upstate Forever, I would not have grasped the scope of the proposed project nor the impact to my land. In response, I went door to door in an effort to locate others on this potential route. We quickly came together as a group of over 35 landowners, Friends of

Beaverdam Creek, with the goal to inform one another and advocate for our land rights. We shared stories of our interactions with the land agents, contacted our elected officials, and reached out to local media with the assistance of Upstate Forever. Each time we requested a public forum to discuss this project, PNG responded with "we prefer to work one on one with landowners". This tactic of allowing negotiations to occur "in the dark" and away from public oversight places landowners at a clear disadvantage. Communication in a public setting ensures that consistent and truthful information is disseminated and also allows for communities to thoughtfully consider utility projects as a whole.

Many of the people in our group have lived in Northern Greenville county their entire lives and often the land has been in their family for generations. Others, like myself moved to this area looking for peace and solitude. There is strong opposition in this community for the proposed increase in development which is the central reason PNG cites for the construction of the pipeline.

In conclusion, I ask that the commission reexamine the process in which pipelines are proposed, evaluated and approved. Landowners deserve to be properly informed and heard regarding projects that directly affect their land. I thank each of you for your service to our state and for your willingness to hear my concerns.

Regards,
Brooks Smith

On Tue, Apr 6, 2021 at 5:12 PM Wilson, Elise <Elise.Wilson@psc.sc.gov> wrote:

Mr. Smith:

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Please, at your convenience, will you send a PDF format of your original attachment. We were not able to open the original.

I appreciate your time in resending this.

Thank you, Mr. Smith.

Regards,

Elise Wilson

Public Service Commission

State of South Carolina

101 Executive Center Drive, Suite 100

Columbia, SC 29210

www.psc.sc.gov

803-896-5100

From: Brooks Smith <brookssmith69@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 4:12 PM

To: PSC Contact <Contact@psc.sc.gov>; Nelson, Jeff <jnelson@ors.sc.gov>; Hall, Roger <RHall@scconsumer.gov>

Subject: [External] Public service commission workshop

Ms. Boyd,

Please see the attached letter regarding the workshop on April 16th, 2021.

Regards,

Brooks Smith